

NEWS RELEASE



***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
San Diego, California***

***United States Attorney
Carol C. Lam***

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NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - March 13, 2006

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced the sentencing today of Christopher Lee Wright, a defendant with ties to the Mexican Mafia prison gang. He is the first defendant to be sentenced in a multiple-defendant, methamphetamine distribution prosecution. Nine defendants have pleaded guilty. Five defendants have pleaded not guilty and are proceeding to trial. Wright was indicted, along with 13 others, at the conclusion of a two-year undercover investigation of the Mexican Mafia and its street-gang associates in San Diego. United States District Court Judge Roger T. Benitez today sentenced Wright to serve a prison term of 151 months for his role in distributing approximately a quarter pound of methamphetamine.

In sentencing Wright, Judge Benitez rejected Wright's claim as a minor participant in distributing the methamphetamine. He also found that Wright's criminal history combined with the amount of methamphetamine involved required a mandatory minimum of ten years in custody.

The charge to which Wright pleaded guilty arose from a single purchase by a cooperating witness that occurred on May 6, 2004. On that date, at approximately 2:40 p.m., Wright delivered the methamphetamine in exchange for \$2,500.

United States Attorney Lam said, "Gangs destroy our youth and endanger our communities, and we are determined to dismantle them."

DEFENDANT

CHRISTOPHER LEE WRIGHT

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Distribution of Methamphetamine, 21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1) and 18 U.S.C. § 2.

AGENCIES

Federal Bureau of Investigation
Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, San Diego Sector
San Diego Police Department